

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SEOUL 06391 290938Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 6391

TOKYO FOR REGFISHATT

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIS OVIP KS US
SUBJ: ROK DIRGEN OF FISHERIES VISIT TO WASHINGTON

REF: STATE 36768

1. ADMIRAL SHIN TAE YONG, DIREGEN ROK OFFICE OF FISHERIES AFFAIRS (OFA), SUMMONED EMBOFF JULY 28 FOR BRIEFING ON HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON ON OR ABOUT AUGUST 3 TO CONSULT APPROPRIATE US OFFICIALS CONCERNING 1978 FISHING ALLOCATIONS FOR KOREA. HE PRESENTED BRIEFING MATERIAL WHICH HE WILL CARRY WITH HIM TO WASHINGTON AND EXPLAINED THAT HE WILL HAVE TTWO PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVES IN HIS DISCUSSIONS.

2. THE FIRST OBJECTIVE WILL BE TO REQUEST THE USG TO INCREASE ROK FISH QUOTAS IN NORTH PACIFIC, PARTICULARLY FOR ALASKA POLLOCK, BY REDUCING OR ELIMINATING THE SOVIET ALASKA POLLOCK QUOTA IN RECOGNITION OF THE FACT THAT THE SOVIETS APPEAR UNALTERABLY OPPOSED TO CONTINUED ROK ACCESS TO THE KAMCHATKA FISHERY. IN 1976 KOREAN VESSELS TOOK 338,000 M/T AND IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1977, 132,000 M/T IN THE KAMCHATKA AREA. ADMIRAL SHIN REFERRED TO US ASSURANCES, PARA 4 REFTTEL, AND
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SEOUL 06391 290938Z

EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT SOVIET ATTITUDES HAD SUFFICIENTLY CLARIFIED FOR USG TO CONSIDER THE ACTION SUGGESTED AT THE TIME THE US PRESENTED INTIAL QUOTAS TO BOTH COUNTRIES.

3. THE SECOND OBJECTIVE IS TO SEEK RELIEF FOR KOREAN FISHERMEN FROM SOME OF THE CONDITIONS IMPOSED ON THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY. THE 30,000 TON ROK QUOTA IN THE GULF OF

ALASKA HAS PROVED TO BE MEANINGLESS AS FAR AS THE ROK FISHERMEN ARE CONCERNED. KOREAN POLLOCK FISHERMEN USE TRAWLERS WHICH CANNOT OPERATE ECONOMICALLY IN THE GULF OF ALASKA BECAUSE OF THE RUGGED CONDITION OF THE SEA BED. THE EAST BERING SEA BED OF COURSE IS FLAT AND USITABLE FOR TRAWL FISHING. ADMIRAL SHIN AND HIS STAFF INDICATED THAT THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF KOREAN VESSELS CATCHING 30,000 TONS IN THE GULF OF ALASKA. THEREFORE NO PURPOSE EXCEPT PERHAPS A POLITICAL ONE EXISTS IN MAINTAINING THAT ALLOCATION. ADDITIONALLY, ROK FISHERMEN HAVE FOUND THAT THE BERING SEA AND ALEUTIAN AREA CONDITIONS EFFECTIVELY PREVENT THEM FROM TAKING ANY BLACK COD WITH THEIR LONGINE VESSELS. BY WAY OF EXAMPLE, HE WILL RELATE THAT ONE VESSEL FOUND THAT IT WOULD TAKE 183 DAYS TO CATCH ITS 300 M/T QUOTA AND INVOLVE A HAVY LOSS OF GEAR IN THE PROCESS BECAUSE OF ROUGH BOTTOM CONDITIONS AND TOO SWIFT CURRENTS IN THE AREA IN WHICH IT IS PERMITTED TO FISH. ADMIRAL SHIN OBSERVED THAT THE MAJOR BLACK COD FISHING GROUNDS BETWEEN 132 DEGREES AND 137 DEGREES WEST LONGITUDE IS RESERVED FOR JAPANESE VESSELS AND HE WILL REQUEST THAT KOREAN VESSELS BE ALLOWED TO SHIFT TO THAT AREA. AN ADDITIONAL PROBLEM ENCOUNTERED BY KOREAN VESSELS IN THE GULF OF ALASKA IS THAT THE RATION OF ALASKA POLLOCK TO OTHER FISH IS ONLY 50-50. BECAUSE THE MISCELLANEOUS CATCH PERMITTED KOREAN VESSELS IS ONLY 2,000 TONS VERSUS ITS 30,000 TON QUOTA, EVEN IF BOTTOM CONDITIONS PERMITTED TRAWLING, KOREAN VESSELS WOULD HAVE TO DISCARD ABOUT HALF OF THE DAILY TAKE OF MISCELLANEOUS FISH THEY WOULD TAKE WITH THE POLLOCK. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SEOUL 06391 290938Z

OBVIOUSLY, THE PURPOSES OF CONSERVATION WOULD NOT BE SERVED BY SUCH WASTE OF THE RESOURCES.

4. KOREAN VESSELS HAVE ALSO FOUND THAT THE PRICES THEY RECEIVE FOR ALASKA POLLOCK DO NOT SUPPORT FISHING FEES OF 3 1/2 PERCENT PER POUND, ALTHOUGH THEY COULD GET BY IF POUNDAGE FEES WERE REDUCED TO 2 1/2 PERCENT. (EMBASSY COMMENT: AFTER MARKET PANIC IN ANTICIPATION OF THE QUOTAS SENT DOMESTIC ALASKA POLLOCK PRICES TO A VERY HIGH LEVEL IN THE FIRST FEW MONTHS OF 1977, PRICES HAVE STEADILY DECLINED TO THE POINT WHERE VESSELS ARE FINDING IT UNECONOMICAL TO CONTINUE FISHING IN THE ALASKAN GULF AREA. PRICE DECLINES ARE DUE TO SEASONAL FACTORS INASMUCH AS ALASKA POLLOCK IS A WINTER DISH. NO ALASKA POLLOCK SHORE PROCESSING IS TAKING PLACE BECAUSE OF THE UNCERTAINTY OF SUPPLY. RECENTLY THE KOREAN KAMCHATKA FLEET MOVED SOUTH TO THE HOKKAIDO AREA WHERE CATCHES HAVE BEEN REASONABLY GOOD ALTHOUGH GOJ, UNDER DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURE, HAS REQUESTED KOREA TO RECALL ITS LARGE TRAWLERS AND EMPLOY VERY SMALL BOATS COMPARABLE TO THE COASTAL BOATS USED IN THAT AREA BY JAPANESE FISHERMEN. PRICES ARE EXPECTED TO RECOVER AS THE SEASON ADVANCES AND SHORTAGES BECOME MORE APPARENT.)

5. ADMIRAL SHIN WILL REQUEST THAT THE 1978 KOREAN QUOTA FOR THE BERING SEA BE INCREASED TO 220,000 TONS OF POLLOCK, 5,000 TONS OF BLACK COD, 44,000 MISCELLANEOUS; AND FOR THE GULF OF ALASKA, 30,000 TONS POLLOCK, 15,000 TONS BLACK COD, 15,000 TONS MISCELLANEOUS FISH, WITH A 10,000 TON SQUID ALLOCATION IN THE ATLANTIC COASTAL AREA. HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE GROC HAS INFORMED KOREA THAT ITS QOUTA OF 5,000 TONS OF POLLOCK WITH 200 M/T OF BLACK COD IS NOT COMMERCIALY VIABLE AND RECOMMENDED THAT THE KOREANS TAKE IT OVER IF POSSIBLE.

6. ADMIRAL SHIN'S SCHEDULE IS BEING ARRANGED BY THE FISHATT OF THE ROK EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON.

7. EMBASSY COMMENT: KOREAN REQUEST FOR THE SOVIET QUOTA IS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SEOUL 06391 290938Z

BASED ON USR DENIAL OF ITS CONTINUED ACCESS TO A TRADITIONAL FISHERY WHICH SUPPLIES A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF ITS PEOPLES NUTRITIONAL NEEDS. PRINCIPLE OF FAIR ACCESS TO TRADITONAL ROK FISHERY ENUNCIATED BY DEPARTMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH FISHERY CONVERSATION AND MANAGEMENT ACT AT THE TIME ORIGINAL QUOTAS WERE PRESENTED TO SOVIETS REMAINS A VALID ONE. THE USG HAS ACCOMMODATED CUBA DESPITE POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES. IN THE SAME SPIRIT, WE SHOULD NOT PERMIT THE USSR TO DISREGARD THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW BY EXCLUDING A COUNTRY FROM ITS FOOD SUPPLY ON POLITICAL GROUNDS, PROVIDING ROK GREATER ACCESS TO U.S. FISHING WOULD GET THIS POINT ACROSS.
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